



Exercise 3.2

Tracking the Policy Process



Policy-making procedures vary from state to state, although they generally follow the seven-step process outlined in *Table 2* in the **Module 3 Trainer's Guide**. A guest speaker can provide insights about the development of a local policy, or you can use **Case Study 6: Improving the Urban Forest in Roanoke, Virginia**, to convey the policy process. This exercise will help your participants become more familiar with the policy-making process and begin thinking about the factors and players involved.

Objectives: Participants will be able to do the following:

1. Distill a local example into the steps of a policy-making process.
2. Identify the steps of policy making.
3. Recognize multiple perspectives of the same policy.
4. Identify the role of their agency in supporting the development of policy.

Materials:

Presentation 3.1
Worksheet 1: Tracking the Process
Flip chart (optional)
Markers (optional)

Time: 45 minutes

1. Contact your local government and identify a policy that was recently adopted and a speaker who is knowledgeable about that particular policy and the process that was used to formalize it. Ask the speaker to come to your workshop and describe the policy-making process. It would be most useful if the policy had something to do with natural resources, and most helpful if the speaker were given a copy of *Worksheet 1: Tracking the Process* ahead of time.
2. Present the corresponding slides for this exercise from **Presentation 3.1**.
3. You can add questions to the worksheet or remove them as appropriate by altering the corresponding file found on the Trainer's CD. Distribute the worksheet to the participants and ask them to make notes in the "Answers" column for each of the framing questions. If the speaker does not provide enough information to reveal the answers, someone should ask specific questions.

4. At the end of the presentation, ask the participants if there are any final questions for the speaker. It may be interesting to ask the speaker to reflect on the policy process with the overview questions. Then ask each participant to identify which of the seven policy-making steps is represented by each question. They are intended to be in chronological order, but the policy example presented by the speaker may not follow these steps exactly. You may need to post the steps on a flip chart.

Optional: If you cannot find a local speaker, you can use **Case Study 6: Improving the Urban Forest in Roanoke, Virginia** instead.

Optional: You can spice things up by introducing contradicting viewpoints either by inviting an opposing speaker (brought in after the first speaker has left) or by asking some of your participants to represent the views of stakeholders who oppose the policy. Discuss which steps of the policy process enable opposing views to be heard. How effectively does the process respond to conflicting views? Every policy has some opposition, and it is valuable for natural resource professionals to gain practice in considering and responding to such opposition.

Summary

Understanding how the policy-making process works and who is involved is essential before participants can get involved. Now that they have heard (or read) about a real-life example of policy development, they are better prepared to think about what their roles in the process might be.



Worksheet 1: Tracking the Process

Complete this chart to distill the elements of the policy-making process.

Policy: _____

Level of government: _____

Step	Framing questions:	Answers:
	What was the initial problem that generated the need for this policy?	
	Who was involved in identifying the problem?	
	When did this process start?	
	To what policy-making group was this problem introduced?	
	Who made the presentation?	
	What was the result?	
	Who formed the policy?	
	Who provided technical information? Was research conducted?	
	What alternatives were considered and by whom?	
	What opportunities were there for public input? Where? When?	

Step	Framing questions:	Answers:
	How did the public become informed?	
	What were the opportunities for technical input?	
	When was the policy adopted?	
	What companion regulations or materials are needed to implement this policy?	
	Who is involved in the implementation of this policy?	
	Have there been any efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy or its implementation?	
	Who should be involved in policy evaluation?	
Overview	What barriers and problems were overcome? How?	
Overview	What could make this a better process?	
Overview	What is the appropriate role of your agency?	
Overview	Who should have been involved but wasn't?	